



NEWS RELEASE

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Contact: Tiffani Clements (202)205-6740
Internet Address: www.sba.gov/news/

SBA AND GSA ENTER INTO PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT TO INCREASE 8(a) CONTRACTING OPPORTUNITIES

WASHINGTON – The U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) and the General Services Administration (GSA) have teamed up to help small businesses participating in SBA's 8(a) Business Development program become more competitive and profitable.

The partnership agreement, which was signed last week, is a joint effort by both the SBA and GSA to increase the participation of 8(a) firms in GSA's Federal Supply Schedules (FSS) program, boost the number of contract dollars awarded to 8(a) firms and allow the federal agencies to count the awards given to 8(a) firms toward their own 8(a) goals. Each fiscal year, the SBA works with the government's major buying agencies in establishing procurement goals for small, small disadvantaged, HUBZone, women-owned and 8(a) businesses.

"During the Clinton-Gore Administration, we have awarded more than \$40 billion in 8(a) federal contracts, mostly to minority-owned businesses," said SBA's Administrator Aida Alvarez. **"This new partnership agreement opens the doors even wider to new contracting opportunities and further streamlines the contracting process. This is a win for 8(a) companies."**

The SBA's 8(a) business development program helps socially and economically disadvantaged businesses compete for federal contracts. In years past, SBA acted as the "middleman" for all contracts between 8(a) certified firms and procuring agencies. Lately, the SBA has been limiting this middleman role through a series of partnerships similar to the GSA agreement.

Before SBA entered into this partnership with GSA, agencies couldn't count awards made to 8(a) firms towards their 8(a) goals. GSA would have to offer each schedule under the FSS program to SBA and the SBA would accept each schedule into the 8(a) program.

With this agreement, SBA will accept all 8(a) contracts under GSA's Multiple Award Schedule program and GSA will no longer have to offer each schedule individually to SBA and wait for an acceptance.

This agreement will shorten the contracting process for agencies trying to award contracts to 8(a) firms in the federal schedule, give agencies credit toward their 8(a) goals and create more contracting opportunities for these developing companies.

Additional information about SBA's programs and services is available at SBA's Web site:
<http://www.sba.gov> or by calling the **SBA's Answer Desk at 1-800 U ASK SBA.**

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